

(43) Date of publication of application: **22.05.1998**

(21) Application number: **08292615**  
(22) Date of filing: **05.11.1996**

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PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To obtain the bar code reader with an automatic focus switching device which is inexpensive and can performs a process in a short time.

**SOLUTION:** This device has a frame memory 7 as a memory array which stores a bar code picked up by a solid image pickup means 4 through an optical system 3, and an automatic focus switching means (automatic focusing part 9, an automatic zooming part 10, a controller 12, and a lens actuator 13) which automatically switch the focal length between the bar code and a device main body. The automatic focal length switching means recognizes a bar code symbol from luminance information on an arbitrary line of the memory array to determine a focal length switching ratio according to the size of the bar code, and then switches the focal length.

